



**U.S. Department of Justice**

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**For Immediate Release:**

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**EVENT: Indictment**

**DEFENDANT: Vassalo K. Russell, of Detroit, Michigan  
Man Charged with Threatening to Blow up Federal Courthouse**

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Vassalo K. Russell, 29, of Detroit was arraigned in federal court in Detroit today, February 23, on an indictment charging him with three counts of Threatening to Use a Weapon of Mass Destruction Against U.S. Government Property in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 2332a. The indictment alleges that between July 13, 2004 and August 23, 2004, Vassalo Russell made three separate bomb threats against the Theodore Levin United States Courthouse, the same building where he was arraigned today. The indictment was handed down by a federal grand jury on November 4, 2004 and sealed pending the apprehension of Vassalo Russell.

In announcing the indictment, United States Attorney Craig S. Morford commended the work of the Special Agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, who conducted the investigation, and the United States Marshal Service, which arrested Mr. Russell in Atlanta, Georgia earlier this month. The prosecution is being handled by Assistant United States

Attorney Kenneth R. Chadwell.

“This indictment underscores the seriousness with which my office, the FBI and the U.S. Marshal Service view such threats,” said United States Attorney Morford. “We will vigorously investigate and prosecute those who terrorize the public by issuing such threats, particularly when the threats include the use of a bomb or other weapons of mass destruction.”

Daniel D. Roberts, Special Agent in Charge, Federal Bureau of Investigation, said “The investigation of terrorist threats remains the FBI’s highest priority. The FBI treats each of these threats seriously, particularly in light of our current elevated threat level and activities taking place throughout the world.”

A copy of the indictment is attached. An indictment is only a charge and is not evidence of guilt. A defendant is entitled to a fair trial in which it will be the government's burden to prove guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.